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The Government Information Services have issued the following statement on behalf of the Government:

The proposals put forward by the United Kingdom Government in the White Paper published today are intended as a basis for further discussion and consultation on the future government of Northern Ireland.

While the Irish Government welcome discussion on possible solutions of the situation in Northern Ireland, their view is that the problem cannot be solved in a Northern Ireland context alone. They wish to see the problem raised to a new inter-governmental level and considered in the context of closer political cooperation between the British and Irish Governments. They believe that a declaration by the British Government of their interest in encouraging Irish unity by consent would advance the situation.

The Government welcome the emphasis placed in the White Paper on the need in the interest of both sections of the community in Northern Ireland to develop the links that exist between the two parts of Ireland and on the unique relationship that exists between the people of Britain

and Ireland and the recognition of the fact that the situation in Northern Ireland inhibits the full growth and development of that unique relationship.

As it is the view of the Irish Government that any solution must be acceptable to both parts of the community in Northern Ireland, they will consider carefully the views expressed by the political leaders in Northern Ireland on the proposals in the White Paper.

The Government are ready to play a constructive part in any programme of discussion which may be proposed to explore the possibility of securing a permanent and lasting solution to this outstanding problem.

2 July, 1980.